Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 36-43 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 14 and 22, and add new Claims 44-46 to read as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A beverage dispensing system comprising:

a beverage dispenser for forming and dispensing a beverage, said beverage dispenser comprising a carbonator in which water is mixed with CO_2 gas to form carbonated water, said beverage dispenser operating under various parameters including a first parameter that is indicative of the quality of the beverage to be dispensed and a second parameter that is indicative as to when routine maintenance is to be scheduled; and

a processor monitoring the various parameters under which said beverage dispenser operates, said processor determining whether the first parameter is outside of a predetermined range and if the first parameter is outside the predetermined range, said processor sends a signal regarding a request for immediate repair service, wherein said processor monitors at least one of the water temperature~~, the water flow rate~~ and the CO_2 gas pressure as the first parameter.

2. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, wherein said processor is integrated with said beverage dispenser.

3. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, wherein said processor constantly monitors the first parameter and periodically monitors the second parameter.

Claim 4 (cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, wherein in said carbonator, the water is pumped by a pump and mixed with the CO_2 gas to form the carbonated water and said processor monitors at least one of the water pressure, the pump flow rate and actual pump usage as the second parameter.

6. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, further comprising a central processing station remote from said beverage dispenser and communicating with said processor.

7. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 6, wherein said central processing station dispatches a repairperson to said beverage dispenser when said processor requests immediate repair service.

8. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 6, wherein said central processing station processes data regarding the second parameter sent from said processor in order to schedule the routine maintenance.

9. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 6, wherein said processor sends the signal regarding the request for immediate repair service to said central processing station immediately upon determining that the first parameter is outside of the predetermined range.

10. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 6, wherein said processor sends data relating to the second parameter to said central service center at periodic intervals.

11. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, wherein said processor is provided remote from said beverage dispenser.

12. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, wherein said processor is programmable and the first and second parameters to be monitored can be changed.

13. (Original) The beverage dispensing system according to claim 1, wherein said processor can control components of said beverage dispenser based on monitored parameters.

14. (Currently Amended) A beverage dispensing method comprising the steps of:

forming and dispensing a beverage with a beverage dispenser, the beverage dispenser comprising a carbonator in which water is mixed with CO_2 gas to form carbonated water, the beverage dispenser operating under various parameters including a first parameter that is indicative of the quality of the beverage to be dispensed and a second parameter that is indicative as to when routine maintenance is to be scheduled;

monitoring the various parameters under which the beverage dispenser operates;

determining whether the first parameter is outside of a predetermined range; and

sending a signal regarding a request for immediate repair service if the first parameter is outside the predetermined range, wherein at least one of the water temperature~~, the water flow rate~~ and the CO_2 gas pressure is monitored in said monitoring step as the first parameter.

15. (Original) The beverage dispensing method according to claim 14, wherein in said monitoring step, the first parameter is constantly monitored and the second parameter is periodically monitored.

Claim 16 (cancelled)

17. (Previously presented) The beverage dispensing method according to claim 14, wherein in the carbonator, the water is pumped by a pump and mixed with the

CO_2 gas to form the carbonated water and in said monitoring step at least one of the water pressure, the pump flow rate and actual pump usage is monitored as the second parameter.

18. (Original) The beverage dispensing method according to claim 14, wherein a central processing station dispatches a repairperson to the beverage dispenser when immediate repair service is requested in said signal sending step.

19. (Original) The beverage dispensing method according to claim 14, wherein a central processing station processes data regarding the second parameter in order to schedule the routine maintenance.

20. (Original) The beverage dispensing method according to claim 14, wherein data relating to the second parameter is sent to a central service center at periodic intervals.

21. (Original) The beverage dispensing method according to claim 14, further comprising the step of controlling components of the beverage dispenser based on monitored parameters.

22. (Withdrawn) A beverage dispensing network comprising:

a plurality of beverage dispensers for forming and dispensing beverages, at least one of said beverage dispensers comprising a carbonator in which water is mixed with

CO_2 gas to form carbonated water, each beverage dispenser operating under various parameters including a first parameter that is indicative of the quality of the beverage to be dispensed and a second parameter that is indicative as to when routine maintenance is to be scheduled;

a processor monitoring the various parameters under which the at least one of said plurality of beverage dispensers operates, said processor determining whether the first parameter is outside of a predetermined range and if the first parameter is outside the predetermined range, said processor sends a signal regarding a request for immediate repair service, wherein said processor monitors at least one of the water temperature~~, the water flow rate~~ and the CO_2 gas pressure as the first parameter; and

a central processing station communicating with said processor and receiving the signal, said central station effecting the immediate repair service.

23. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said processor is integrated with at least one of said beverage dispensers.

24. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said processor constantly monitors the first parameter and periodically monitors the second parameter.

Claim 25 (cancelled)

26. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein in the carbonator, the water is pumped by a pump and is mixed with the CO_2 gas to form the carbonated water and said processor monitors at least one of the water pressure, the pump flow rate and actual pump usage as the second parameter.

27. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said central processing station dispatches a repairperson to said beverage dispenser when said processor requests immediate repair service.

28. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said central processing station processes data regarding the second parameter sent from said processor in order to schedule the routine maintenance.

29. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said processor sends the signal regarding the request for immediate repair service to said central processing station immediately upon determining that the first parameter is outside of the predetermined range.

30. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said processor sends data relating to the second parameter to said central service center at periodic intervals.

31. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network system according to claim 22, wherein said processor is provided remote from said beverage dispensers.

32. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said processor is programmable and the first and second parameters to be monitored can be changed.

33. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein said processor can control components of said beverage dispensers based on monitored parameters.

34. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 22, wherein information is transmitted from said processor to said central processing station in a parameter definition file, the parameter definition file being scalable to accommodate parameters of different sizes.

35. (Withdrawn) The beverage dispensing network according to claim 34, wherein each parameter definition file includes an ID identifying the dispenser from among said plurality of dispensers with which the accompanying parameters are associated.

Claims 36-43 (Cancelled)

44. (New) The beverage dispensing system according to Claim 1, wherein said processor further monitors the water flow rate to the carbonator as the first parameter.

45. (New) The beverage dispensing method according to Claim 14, wherein in said monitoring step, the water flow rate to the carbonator is further monitored as the first parameter.

46. (New) The beverage dispensing network according to Claim 22, wherein said processor further monitors the water flow rate to the carbonator as the first parameter.